

St. Margaret of Scotland Athletic Association 2008-2009 Parent Handbook

The St. Margaret of Scotland Athletic Association is a group of parents, parishioners and friends that coordinates athletic programs offered through the St. Margaret of Scotland Parish and School. The Athletic Association has prepared this handbook to share information about the Association's programs with student-athletes, parents and coaches.

The Athletic Association offers instructional and competitive opportunities for participation in the following sports for boys and girls in Grades K to 8:

Fall	Soccer and Volleyball
Winter	Basketball
Spring	T-ball, Baseball, and Softball

For adults, the Association offers a volleyball league in the fall and spring months and baseball/softball teams in the summer months.

The Association provides athletic equipment for each sport, coordinates team uniform sales, hosts tournaments and helps to maintain the gym at the St. Margaret of Scotland School.

The St. Margaret of Scotland Athletic Association is comprised of a Board of Directors with up to nineteen officer and at large positions. The Association operates within the jurisdiction of the Catholic Youth Council (CYC) of the St. Louis, Missouri Archdiocese.

Mission

The mission of the Catholic Youth Council is to proclaim Jesus Christ in word and action by serving the needs of every boy and girl, regardless of ability, religious affiliation or ethnic background, to develop discipline and skills necessary to obtain and sustain individual achievements, build character and to develop valued relationships and teamwork. With that mission in mind, the objective of the St. Margaret of Scotland Athletic Association is to foster sound athletics through programs that will promote good sportsmanship, respect for authority, self-discipline and leadership skills.

Policy and Procedures

Registration and Fees – The Athletic Association establishes minimal roster requirements and collects fees because its athletes participate in the context of organized leagues and tournaments that charge application fees and mandate specific roster standards. Therefore, the Association requires participants of each sport to register and pay a small fee.

On an annual basis, information about registration is included in the SMOS Athletic Association Handbook. In addition, information about registration is publicized in the Church Bulletin and the School's Thursday Newsletter prior to the registration period for each sport.

Opportunities for registration typically occur over a one week period during the following times:

- Basketball during September
- Baseball during February
- Soccer and Volleyball during May

Athletes may register in the church basement on two consecutive Sundays and in the school gym before and after school on specified weekdays. An Athletic Association representative is present to assist with registration and collect activity fees. Registration involves completing a simple form noting identifying information and paying the associated fee. Athletes are considered registered for a sport when the registration form is completed and the activity fee paid.

It is the policy of the Association to collect activity fees (\$30) for each grade school sport in a timely manner. Activity fees are due at the time of registration. Registration is not considered complete until fees are paid in full or the registrant has been granted "hardship status" by the Sports Lay Director.

When the registration period for each sport has ended, the Sport Lay Director ensures that all registrants have paid relevant fees. Notification is made by phone to the parent of each registrant with unpaid fees. The parent is provided a reasonable deadline to pay the fee in care of the Sports Lay Director. At his or her discretion, the Sports Lay Director may also notify the team's prospective coach of sign-ups with unpaid fees as an additional means to influence final payment. Following

such efforts to collect unpaid fees, the Sports Lay Director drops names of registrants who have not paid the activity fee or been granted "hardship status".

Team Composition & Participation – Team competition requires a minimum number of athletes on each team. Practical considerations require each team to have more than the minimum number of athletes to allow the team to practice and compete on a regular basis. The SMOS Athletic Association strives to maintain roster sizes for each grade-school sport within the following ranges in order to provide maximum individual attention and playing time per athlete while preventing forfeitures due to inadequate roster sizes.

Soccer	Basketball	Volleyball	Baseball
12 to 14 players (8 position teams)	9 to 10 players	9 to 10 players	13 to 15 players
15 to 17 players (11 position teams)			

Minimum roster size may be decreased by up to two players in 2nd grade to 8th grade levels for established teams that have no history of forfeitures. Mixed age and mixed gender teams may be fielded, if necessary, in pre-Kindergarten to 2nd grade levels.

Procedure When Complete SMOS Team Cannot Be Fielded – It is the goal of the SMOS Athletic Association to provide as many athletes from the parish as possible an opportunity to play on SMOS sponsored teams while also fielding same age and same gender teams in grade school sports. However, due to differences in class size and gender composition within given grades, it is not always possible to field a complete team of SMOS athletes in a given sport in a given year for a given grade or gender. In such circumstances, the SMOS Athletic Association has several options to provide athletes affected by this situation an opportunity to participate in the particular sport. The SMOS Athletic Association can take part in a process that allows it to "pool" SMOS athletes with athletes from other parishes -- either by pooling SMOS athletes out to teams sponsored by other parishes or by pooling in athletes from other parishes to complete a team sponsored by SMOS. In certain circumstances, the SMOS Athletic Association also has the option of combining two SMOS teams from contiguous grades into one SMOS team. Consistent with its overall mission, the SMOS Athletic Association will attempt to determine which of the above options is appropriate in a given situation by adhering to the following guidelines in order of preference:

1. When SMOS is able to field a "Complete SMOS Team" in a given sport in a given grade in a given gender, it will do so. In such circumstances, SMOS athletes in that grade and of that gender shall play on the team in their grade ONLY. Individual players will not be permitted to "play up" on older teams when there is a SMOS team in that sport in their grade. A "Complete SMOS Team" for purposes of these guidelines includes teams comprised entirely of SMOS athletes and teams with athletes pooled in from other parishes, as long as the team is sponsored by SMOS.
2. The SMOS Athletic Association will always try to field a Complete SMOS Team in a given sport in a given grade, so its first priority when there are not enough SMOS athletes to field a Complete SMOS Team will be to pool in athletes from other parishes, rather than to pool out SMOS athletes to teams sponsored by other parishes. For this to be possible, however, there must be a SMOS coach for that team, and there must be sufficient SMOS athletes in that grade to comprise a plurality of the members of the team.
3. When SMOS is not able to field a Complete SMOS Team in a given sport in a given grade for a given gender, because it does not have enough SMOS athletes and/or does not have a SMOS coach for that team, the SMOS Athletic Association will give any interested SMOS athletes in that grade the option of being pooled out to another team or teams sponsored by another parish. SMOS athletes will be asked to indicate on their registration forms whether they are willing to be pooled out to another team sponsored by another parish if the need arises.
4. In the event that SMOS is not able to field a Complete SMOS Team in a given sport and a given gender in TWO CONTIGUOUS GRADES (e.g., 5th and 6th, 7th and 8th, etc.), and it is not possible to either pool in athletes from other parishes or pool out SMOS athletes to other parishes in both of the contiguous grades, the SMOS Athletic Association will evaluate the total number of SMOS athletes in the two affected grades to determine if one combined SMOS team can be formed consistent with the appropriate number of athletes for a team in the particular sport at issue. If the total number of SMOS athletes in the two affected grades, when combined, constitutes an appropriate number of athletes for a team in the particular sport, and if there is a SMOS coach available for such a combined team, the SMOS Athletic Association will field a "Combined SMOS Team" in that sport. The Combined SMOS Team will play in a league at the grade level of the older of the two combined grades, consistent with CYC rules.

Procedure When Two Complete SMOS Teams Can Be Fielded – In the event that the number of SMOS athletes in a given grade in a given gender is sufficient to comprise two complete SMOS Teams in a particular sport, the SMOS Athletic Association will adhere to the following guidelines for dividing SMOS athletes into two such teams:

1. Prior to 5th grade, team composition will be determined by a random drawing of names. Siblings will automatically be placed on the same team for teams participating at the Instructional Level ONLY.
2. For teams competing at the 5th through 8th grade level in CYC, teams will be divided based on ability. Two coaches and the Lay Director for the particular sport will determine the composition of teams based on an evaluation of current skill level as established by observing all players at two combined practices. Team composition shall be reviewed at the start of each new season and siblings will not receive preferential treatment. Coaches will notify parents following signups of the need for team division. After two combined practices, coaches will notify parents of their children's team assignments.

St. Margaret of Scotland Ambassadors – Parents, Participants & Coaches

Parent Conduct – Since these are parish teams, it is extremely important that St. Margaret of Scotland be represented in a positive way. It is detrimental for the behavior of parents to affect the reputation of the Parish or School. Remember, parents are role models to our children. Parents are encouraged to attend games and cheer on their favorite teams. However, unacceptable behavior from any parent can result in a team being removed from the league. Coaches are responsible for their players' and parents' conduct during games. They have the right to ask any adult or child to be quiet.

Parents should allow coaches to coach during the game. It can be very confusing to players if the coach is telling them one thing and parents are yelling another. Also, parents are encouraged not to approach coaches before, during or after the game with a problem or concern. There is a 24-hour rule. If there are a concern about a game or practice, parents are asked to wait 24 hours before contacting the coach so both parent and the coach have time to review and consider the situation. That way, calm, level heads are likely to prevail.

Participant Conduct – As a participating player, it is expected that all athletes will participate with 110% effort, listen and follow directions, and demonstrate proper sportsmanship toward others at all times. Athletes are encouraged to work outside of practice on the skills that have been taught. This will promote a positive attitude as players become more successful meeting their own athletic goals, as well as the teams. The Association has the right to remove an athlete from a team if inappropriate behavior is demonstrated during practice or game times.

Coaches: Volunteers Leading and Teaching – Coaches are a very important part of an athlete's experience. Coaches influence players' physical, mental and emotional development. In order to be as effective as possible, coaches need to be prepared for practices and games, be a positive role model, attend coaches' meetings and clinics as much as possible, focus on skill development, build teamwork and emphasize positive sportsmanship within the team as well as between the team and the competition. It is important to understand that most young athletes drop out of sports because they no longer find the sport fun. Coaches should strive to make practices and games fun.

Communication with players and their parents is important. Coaches can not always depend on child-athletes to clearly communicate. Parents need to be kept informed and involved. The utilization of a Team Parent to make phone calls is an excellent way to delegate some of the work required in communicating information.

Coaches have the right to ask athletes to sit out of practice, run laps or miss games for the following:

- Not listening and paying attention
- Skipping practices
- Demonstrating poor sportsmanship
- Not hustling or being an effective team player

Of course, this emphasis is more prevalent in the upper grades. Coaches of older athletes should strive to develop self-control and leadership qualities in their athletes.

When dealing with officials, the Association expects coaches to handle themselves without yelling or losing their tempers. If a coach has a major problem, it should be reported to the Association's Lay Director. Any disruptive parents or player should be reported as well. Above all, remember to have fun and keep it fun for the children.

Coaches: Background Screening, Ethical Conduct and Training – Managers/Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches of SMOS teams are required to complete the four requirements noted in this section. These requirements are a result of Archdiocese and CYC rules that are meant to increase the safety of children and adults involved with parish activities and to enhance the talent and skill of those that lead and coach teams.

Background Screening for Abuse/Neglect and Criminal History: All Managers/Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches listed on a Grade K to 8 team roster must complete a background screening. Screenings are routinely completed every other year.

Commitment to Code of Ethical Conduct: All Managers/Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches listed on a Grade K to 8 team roster must commit by signature to adhering to the Archdiocese of St. Louis Code of Ethical Conduct.

'Protecting God's Children' Training: All Managers/Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches listed on a Grade K to 8 team roster must complete this training. The training is offered free-of-charge by the Archdiocese and is good for the lifetime of the coach.

'Coaching to Make a Positive Difference' Training: All Managers listed on a Grade K to 8 team roster must complete this training. The training is completed once and is good for the lifetime of the coach. It is provided free-of-charge to Managers/Head Coaches by the CYC. Assistant Coaches are not required to complete this training and may be charged a small fee for attendance.

Prior to submitting a roster for league registration, the Lay Director will verify that all Managers/head Coaches and Assistant Coaches listed on the roster have met each requirement. Only individuals who have satisfied these requirements are allowed to act in a coaching capacity with an SMOS team.

The Athletic Association has established procedures to assist coaches with satisfying these requirements. Contact the Board President or a Lay Director of the Athletic Association for more information.

Equipment and Uniforms

All team equipment needed for practices and games will be provided by the SMOS Athletic Association and coordinated by its Gym & Equipment Director. Athletes will provide their own individual equipment (e.g. soccer shin guards, volleyball knee pads, baseball gloves and appropriate shoes).

The Athletic Association chooses a standard-issue uniform that functions for all sports. Athletes are to wear the standard issue SMOS uniform for their level – Primary Level (K – 4th grade) and Upper Level (5th to 8th grade). These uniforms may be purchased from the Athletic Association's Gym & Equipment Director.

Should a team wish to purchase a different uniform at the team's own expense, the uniform must be approved by the Athletic Association Board prior to purchase and conform to the Association's specifications for signage and colors. Failure to do so will forfeit the team's sponsorship by the Association.

Volunteerism: We Can't Do It Without You!

Athletic Activity fees cover approximately 60% of the operating cost of the Athletic Association programs. **To help defray cost, each family is required to volunteer a minimum of ten (10) hours per year.** Volunteer opportunities abound – coaching, being a Team Parent, working at basketball tournaments, staffing the concession stand, assisting with other fundraisers, etc. Please do your part when called upon.

Contact Information

SMOS Athletic Association Board of Director Officers

President	Jerrod Gerstner	773-4872
Vice President	Jim Pudlowski	776-6560
Treasurer	Joe Civettini	664-8993
Secretary	Bonita Rohling	776-6383

SMOS Athletic Association Sports Lay Directors

CYC Soccer	Craig Andrews	664-4341
Judge Dowd Soccer	Rick Blaes	771-9373
Volleyball	Mark Franko	771-1729
Basketball	Chris Kuehn	664-1772
Baseball	Don Burrus	776-0517

SMOS Athletic Association Gym Director & Equipment Manager

Pat Bittick	865-0612
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